

Teaching Philosophy Statement

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Accountable. Dynamic. Interactive.

These are the characteristics that define the Mass Communication field at the turn of the 21st century. I believe these same characteristics are just as important in the university classroom.

As an instructor of Public Relations and Advertising, I am fortunate to teach a subject that students experience first-hand every day and which is filled with an ever changing array of real-world examples. I believe it my responsibility to connect the concepts and theories in the course materials with tangible examples of these concepts in use by practitioners. If a student can see how the knowledge gained in class can improve their internship or job prospects, as well as make a positive impact on society, they will stop memorizing for a test and start learning for their future.

Accountable

At the start of a new class each semester, I discuss “my promise to you” as well as “what I dislike as a student.” This includes instructors who seem to change the rules as they go, who don’t encourage class participation, are hard to reach outside of class, and say they want questions, but don’t act that way. At the same time, I outline what is expected in turn from the students. In short, both the instructor and the students should be held accountable for their performance. I believe it is my responsibility to integrate professionalism and ethics into all that I do in the classroom so students see that accountability and responsibility aren’t buzzwords, but core tenets to work and live by.

Dynamic

Every day there is a new advertising or public relations campaign in the news. Again, we teach in a dynamic field that is literally overflowing with valuable real-world examples that we can use to enliven and inform our class discussions. I am passionate and excited about our field and believe it is important that the students see this passion in the classroom from their instructor. If I am not excited about the course materials, why should the students be? As part of sharing this excitement for the field, I believe guest speakers can be a valuable addition to the classroom. In previous classes, invited guests have included professional journalists and public relations practitioners.

Interactive

Advertising and public relations is a field that thrives on team work, collaboration and a free flow of ideas. With this in mind, I believe it is my responsibility to encourage an interactive environment in the classroom that respects a diversity of viewpoints. I haven’t done my job unless my lectures and in-class assignments result in student discussion. We should encourage dialogue and not be satisfied with an instructor-only monologue. Through assigning team-based projects using real-world brands, I believe students not only learn to apply course concepts in a real-world setting, but they improve their collaboration, critical-thinking and presentation skills. An interactive classroom is a two-way street and I encourage student feedback so that I may also learn and grow as an instructor.

In closing, I am committed to research and service to my institution and community, but never lose sight of the fact that each day in the classroom “what we say and do” has the potential to last a lifetime. Teaching is a privilege and I respect this opportunity.